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Saudi Ambassador Expresses Kingdom's Commitment to Youth

Washington DC (July 26, 2011) — The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to the United States, Adel bin Ahmed Al-Jubeir, headed the Kingdom's delegation to the United Nation's 2011 High Level Meeting on Youth. The meeting was part of the UN's "International Year of Youth," which began in August 2010 and has focused on providing opportunities for youth around the world.

Speaking about the High Level Meeting, Ambassador Al-Jubeir said, "Our youth are Saudi Arabia's greatest natural resource, and the Kingdom is committed to guiding and supporting them in order to allow them to reach their full potential. Throughout its history, Saudi Arabia has allocated substantial resources to improve the lives of its citizens, particularly its youth."

"If a nation provides opportunities to its youth, they will develop into productive citizens, and the nation will prosper. The Kingdom could not have reached its current level of development had it not paid attention to its youth decades ago," said Al-Jubeir.

Ambassador Al-Jubeir outlined a number of the areas highlighting Saudi Arabia's commitment to its youth. These include:

- The Saudi National Dialogue "Youth: Reality and Expectations" held in 2004 which brought together a broad cross-section of Saudi society for in-depth discussion on the role and place of youth in Saudi society.
- The Kingdom allocates approximately 25 percent of its annual budget for education initiatives. Every citizen is ensured access to education from primary school through graduate study.
- Through the King Abdullah Scholarship Program for Study Abroad, the Saudi government has offered scholarships to more than 120,000 students to study at universities worldwide.
- The Disabled Children's Association was established in 1995 with a grant from Riyadh Governor Prince Salman bin Abdulaziz. More than 100 founders established endowments worth more than \$150 million for the center. King Abdullah has also emphasized guidance and counseling services for children at behavioral-problem centers, vocational training to children with special needs, and assistance to families that have disabled children.

- The Kingdom also has a number of gifted student programs and scholarships; the King Abdulaziz and his Companions Foundation for the Gifted being one of the most prominent.
- Last year, Saudi Arabia announced plans for the establishment of 25 new colleges of technology, 28 higher technical institutes, and 50 industrial training institutes. The system is open to all citizens, and is free of charge.
- The General Presidency for Youth Welfare oversees athletic, cultural and social activities, and organizes regular competitions and exhibitions in the Kingdom and throughout the world.
- The Saudi Boy Scouts is active domestically and internationally. It works with schools and communities to promote social harmony by helping marginalized young people rejoin mainstream society. Its "Gifts for Peace" program is helping to build bridges between nations.

Ambassador Al-Jubeir added: "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is committed to its youth. After all, they are our future."

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Saudi King Urges Muslim Scholars to Spread the Message of True Islam

WASHINGTON, July 26, 2011 – On Monday, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz urged participants at a conference in Makkah to express disappointment at fellow Muslims causing harm to Islam. King Abdullah called on participants to abide by the Islamic creed, *Aqeedah*, and exert more effort to present the true message of Islam.

King Abdullah expressed his distress at Muslims causing harm to Islam and one another. He added that this kind of behavior enables and provides the enemies of Islam with an opportunity.

"You scholars should uphold the basic principles of Islam which are principles of love, principles of loyalty and principles of sincerity and faith," said King Abdullah while later addressing a reception for the scholars at his palace in Jeddah.

The three-day conference, organized by the Muslim World League, urged scholars, intellectuals and all Islamic organizations to cooperate in intensifying education programs. The aim of these programs is to enlighten Muslim youth to the true message of Islam.

The conference called upon Muslim countries, the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic Conference, and international institutions to take every possible step in preventing harmful acts against Islam and Muslim communities.

King Abdullah was also praised for his work fostering dialogue between different religions through the Interfaith Dialogue Initiative, which has helped increase understanding, cooperation and peaceful coexistence among nations.

For more information on Saudi Arabia's interfaith initiatives please visit www.saudiembassy.net or follow the Embassy on Twitter @SaudiEmbassyUSA.

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